

"Take me fishing"














Family Fishing Guide

Gone Fishing!

Looking for a great way to spend quality time with your children in a relaxed environment far away from television and other household distractions? Go fishing! Start a family tradition that is sure to create lots of fun memories.

A child's first fishing trip is exciting for both parent and child. A fun experience can lead to future years of fishing enjoyment. Here are some simple tips for taking kids fishing.



-  pack plenty of snacks and cold drinks
-  choose a spot close to home
-  make sure there are restrooms near
-  morning trips are best – the fish bite better and kids have more energy
-  pick a sunny day with moderate temperatures
-  keep the trip short – a couple hours at most
-  leave *your* fishing rod at home
-  emphasize that **fishing is fun**, *catching* is a bonus
-  take plenty of breaks from fishing
-  have fun!
-  take pictures
-  plan alternate activities to do if the weather turns bad or your child gets bored
-  remember you are taking the kids — they aren't taking you

Fishing Trip Checklist

- ☐ bobbers
- ☐ camera
- ☐ cooler/ice
- ☐ drinks
- ☐ fishing license
- ☐ fishing rods, youth
- ☐ first aid kit
- ☐ insect repellent
- ☐ life jackets
- ☐ snacks
- ☐ sunglasses
- ☐ sunscreen
- ☐ wet wipes
- ☐ worms

Safety Tips

Bring a basic first aid kit with sterile bandages, tape, antiseptic, band aids, aspirin, scissors, wire cutters, tweezers, analgesic cream, sunscreen, and insect repellent.

A wide brim hat and sunglasses will keep the sun out of your child's eyes and off his forehead. Avoid fishing in the middle of the day.

Life jackets are strongly recommended for children fishing around deep or fast-moving water. Make sure the life jacket fits your child snugly and won't ride up around her face.



Aquatic Education Program
Iowa Department of Natural Resources



Who Needs a Fishing License?

All anglers 16 years and older must have a fishing license to fish Iowa waters. Yearly, seven-day, or 24-hour licenses are available. Licenses are sold at several locations including Dahls, Hy-Vee, Kmart, Wal-Mart, the county recorder, bait and tackle shops, banks, sporting goods stores, or online: www.iowadnr.gov. For a complete list of sites, visit www.iowadnr.gov/cs/files/elsivendors.pdf or call 1-800-367-1188 to purchase a license 24 hours a day.

License fees and an excise on fishing equipment fund stocking, shoreline and fish habitat improvement, construction and repair of fish jetties, fish surveys, and angler education programs.

Fishing Regulations

There are limits on the size and/or number of fish you can catch at one time for some species. A more complete description of laws is in the *Iowa Fishing Regulations*, available where you buy a license and Department of Natural Resources offices. They also are available online at www.iowadnr.gov/law/regs.html.



Rigging Up

Fishing Poles

Choose a fishing pole that fits your child's hands. It should be about as long as your child is tall. There are a variety of youth-size rods and reels (complete with line) for sale.

The simplest fishing rod is a cane pole. It can be made of bamboo, fiberglass, graphite, or even a tree branch. Fishing line is tied to the end of the pole. There is no reel. You simply toss the line into the water and wait for a fish to bite.

A spincast rod is great for beginners. The fishing line comes out of a hole in the reel cover. A thumb button releases the line or stops it from going too far.

Tackle and Bait

Start with worms and a small bobber. Hooks are sharp, make sure you help children put the worm on. Hook the worm through the body two or three times. Nightcrawlers work great and you can even have a fun evening collecting them. Keep the worms in a closed container inside a cooler with ice to keep them fresh.

Minnows are another good bait for beginners. You can buy them at local bait and tackle shops. Keep them in a bucket of water. Use a small dipping net to catch them. Run the hook through the back just below the dorsal fin — don't hook it through the spinal cord.

Bobbers keep your bait suspended off the bottom and where the fish are biting. They bob up and down when you have a bite. Kids love to watch them.

Equal Opportunity

Federal regulations prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, or handicap. If you believe that you have been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility as described above, or if you desire further information, please write to: Director, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Wallace State Office Building, 502 East 9th Street, Des Moines, IA 50319-0034.

Tying on the Hook

The Trilene[®] knot is a strong all-purpose knot that you can use to tie a hook to your line. Follow these simple instructions.

1. Run the end of the line through the eye of the hook two times.



2. Loop the line around four or five times, then thread the loose end back between the two loops near the hook.



3. Pull tight. Trim the loose end.

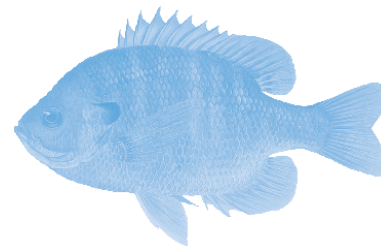


Tips for Catching catfish/panfish

May and June are the best time to catch fish because they are hungry and close to shore. Bluegills, channel catfish, and crappies are easy to catch. There are a lot of them and they are exceptionally fine eating.

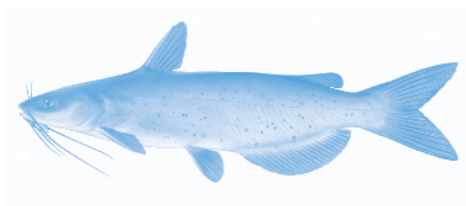
Bluegills

- eat aquatic insects
- small pieces of worms are the best live bait; small hooks (#6 or 8)



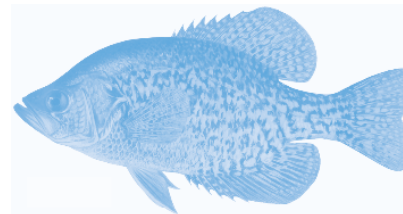
Channel Catfish

- eat mainly off bottom
- prefer worms and various stink baits



Crappie

- often found under docks or near jetties where there is plenty of food and the water is cooler
- small minnows (1- to 1 1/2-inches) are the best live bait



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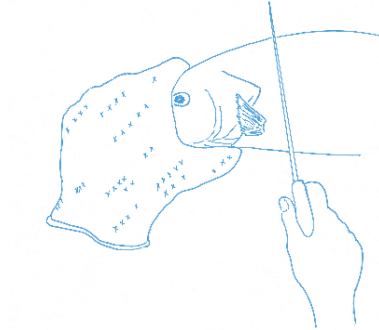
Let's Eat!

Freshly caught fish tastes great if it's cared for properly. Store caught fish in a cooler with ice until you get home. To preserve a fresh taste, clean your fish as soon as possible. Filleting and skinning are two simple ways to clean your catch.

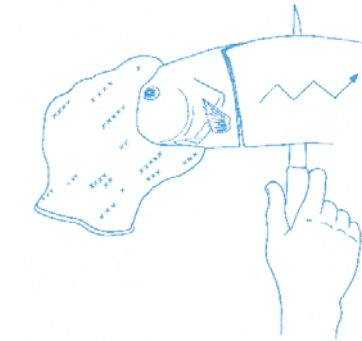
Filleting

You don't need to remove the internal organs, head, or fins. The fillets are boneless. Use a *sharp* fillet knife with a thin, flexible blade. Wear a fillet glove on your free hand to prevent serious cuts.

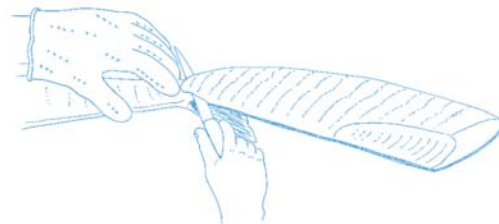
1. Place fish on its side on a firm, flat surface. Hold it by the head. Cut just behind the gill cover and down to, but not through, the backbone.



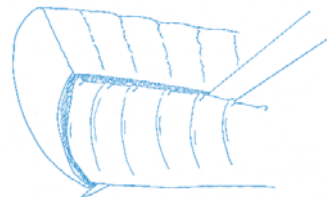
2. Turn the knife so the blade is against, and nearly parallel to, the backbone. Hold fish firmly with one hand and use a sawing motion to cut through the ribs toward the tail. Continue to the base of the tail. (Note: Some anglers fillet the meat around the ribs rather than cutting through them.)



3. Place the knife near the tail end of the fillet with the blade next to the skin. Hold fish at the base of the tail with your fingertips and work the blade forward between the skin and flesh.



4. Place the edge of the knife blade just under the top of the ribs and slice them out of the fillet.



5. Repeat procedure on other side of fish.

Skinning

Channel catfish and bullheads often are **skinned**. The materials needed are a sharp knife, pliers, fillet glove, and firm surface.

1. Grip the head tightly with the pectoral fins tucked between the fingers. Slit the skin along the backbone from just behind the head to the dorsal fin. Cut the skin on either side of the dorsal fin.



2. With a firm hold on the head, grasp the skin with the pliers and pull toward the tail fin to remove.



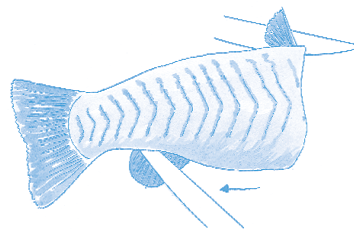
3. Grasp the head with one hand and the body with the other. Bend the head downward to break the backbone. Remove the head.



4. Slit the belly and remove the internal organs.



5. Optional: Cut along both sides of the dorsal and anal fins and use the pliers to remove.



Preparation

Wash cleaned fish thoroughly. If you are not going to cook the fish right away, freeze immediately in a container (milk carton, pop-top plastic container, freezer bag, etc.) filled with water. Thaw fish in the refrigerator or under cold running water. Do not thaw fish more than one day before cooking.

Rinse fresh fish in cold water and pat dry. Make several shallow, diagonal cuts in large fillets to shorten cooking time. Cook refrigerated fish within three days.

Cooking

There are several ways to cook fish. Fish cooks very fast. When done, it will pull apart and flake. To check if it is done, cut into the thickest part and make sure there is no opaque color or jelly texture left. Do *not* overcook.

Several cookbooks have excellent fish recipes. Great recipes also are available online. Check out the following webpages: allrecipes.com/Recipes/Seafood/Fish/Main.aspx; www.landbigfish.com/recipes/recipes.cfm.

Pan Frying

2 lbs. fish steaks or fillets	1 egg
vegetable or peanut oil	flour, biscuit or pancake mix, cracker crumbs, or cornmeal for coating
1/2 c. milk	heavy skillet which distributes heat evenly

Mix milk and egg in a small bowl. Set aside. Heat oil over medium heat (350-375 °F). Dip fish pieces in milk/egg mixture. Roll them in flour or other coating material. Place in skillet, don't overcrowd. Fry each side 3-5 minutes or until brown and flakes easily. Thicker pieces will require longer cooking. Remove from skillet and place on paper towels or bread slices to drain. Serve immediately.



Deep Frying

2 lbs. small fish fillets or two-inch chunks of fish	1 egg
vegetable or peanut oil	flour, biscuit or pancake mix, cracker crumbs, or cornmeal for coating
1/2 c. milk	deep fryer

Fill the deep fryer with oil to a depth of two or more inches. Heat to 375 °F. Mix milk and egg in a small bowl. Dip fish pieces in the milk and egg mixture and then roll in flour or other coating material. Add fish to the hot oil and fry until golden brown. Remove fish from fryer and drain on paper towels or bread slices. Do not overcrowd the fryer. Allow the temperature to heat back to 375 °F between batches if you cook more than one. Serve immediately.



Baked Fish

2 lbs. whole fish, large fillets, or steaks
vegetable oil
1/2 c. melted butter
1 T. lemon juice



Heat oven to 375 °F. Lightly oil the bottom of a 9 x 11-inch baking pan or casserole. Place fish in pan. Mix lemon juice and melted butter in a small bowl. Using a pastry brush, coat fish with butter/lemon mixture. Cover pan and bake 30-40 minutes or until meat is white and flakes easily. Baste with butter and lemon mixture every 10-15 minutes. Serve immediately.

Microwave

fish fillets
lemon pepper seasoning
lemon juice

Pat fillets dry and lay in microwave safe dish (one layer deep). Sprinkle with lemon pepper. Microwave on medium-high until white and flaky. Turn pan and/or rearrange fillets when half done to insure more even cooking. (Cooking time depends on thickness and number of fillets.) Remove from oven and sprinkle with lemon juice. Serve immediately.

Grilling

6-8 panfish, cleaned	Cajun spice
lemon pepper	1/2 c. vegetable oil
1 fresh lemon (or lemon juice)	foil
5 T. Greek seasoning	

Cover grill grate with aluminum foil (or use a grilling pan). Lightly sprinkle the inside of fish with Cajun seasoning. Mix Greek seasoning and oil. Brush a thin layer of vegetable oil/Greek seasoning on outside of fish. Grill until white and flaky in the middle, turning at least once. Remove fish from grill and squeeze lemon juice lightly over. Sprinkle with lemon pepper. Serve immediately.